

# Comment Report

SSB 3131

A bill for an act relating to public libraries, including city and county tax levies for public libraries, and city library board authority and property.

Subcommittee Members: Green-CH, Klimesh, Knox

Date: 02/05/2024

Time: 02:00 PM

Location: Room G15

**Name:** Julie Finch

**Comment:** I am against SSB 3131! Libraries are places that bring people and ideas together. A well functioning democracy allows for the free expression of speech and assembly. Libraries are the best places to do that. The average monetary return on investment of one dollar invested in the library is four dollars back or more to the community. Additionally, libraries serve as cooling and warming centers as our weather changes rapidly, and makes sheltering outside impossible for our homeless. Libraries provide hours of wonderful programming for people aged 0 to 100. Libraries provide assistance to jobseekers and provide materials of all sorts to people who want to learn and enrich their lives. This bill does not provide any possible benefit, except to further politicize libraries, which by their very nature are apolitic.

**Name:** Emma Stoffer

**Comment:** SSB 3131 is an egregious attempt to strip Iowans of their local civic power. Library Boards are composed of local individuals who receive unique training and expertise related to library functions and services. These are individuals who have passion for their public libraries and who demonstrate dedication to their communities through the continued advocacy for these libraries. By stripping Library Boards of their authority, SSB 3131 imperils the future of public libraries as it threatens their autonomy, integrity, and financial stability. Public libraries are essential to their communities as they are places of education, discovery, and connection. Consequently, Library Boards are essential community entities that exist to provide local governance through their understanding of the unique needs and aspirations of those very communities. City councils across the state are not equipped to take on this responsibility, nor should they be expected to; Library Boards, city, and county leaders earnestly collaborate in their commitment to provide the best possible services to their communities. State leaders need to respect the expertise of their fellow governing entities and refrain from imposing unnecessary restrictions on the very people they serve.

**Name:** Craig Patterson

**Comment:** A NOTE FOR THE SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS There are many and a growing number of comments submitted by the public at the original page (<https://www.legis.iowa.gov/committees/meetingPublicComment?meetingID=38142&action=viewCommitteePublicComments>) When you relocated the subcommittee to a larger room at my request (THANK YOU!), the link to submit comments changed. I wanted to ensure that a note is posted here with the link to the original comments submitted so they don't get inadvertently missed. Thank you!

**Name:** Nancy Fett

**Comment:** Leave our libraries alone! It is the great equalizer allowing anyone to come access

material for knowledge, work or pleasure. Its a gathering place for the old and the young. Its the easiest entity to fund because it serves all year long, has more purpose than originally designed for, and continues to reinvent and meet the people where they are! I would be lost without access!

**Name:** Susan Benderson

**Comment:** Libraries foster a love of learning and an understanding of the world around us beyond our personal life experiences. I have been entertained, informed and educated there since I learned to read. In addition they provide meeting space for groups to collaborate, educate and socialize. Don't cut funding/support for this valuable free public resource.

**Name:** Carmen Golay

**Comment:** Commenting here again since the room changed I oppose SSB3131. Keep local control over libraries. There is no benefit to this bill. Our small town and rural communities have excellent volunteer library boards and there's no need for this proposed change.

**Name:** Robert Fiedler

**Comment:** I am utterly disheartened by the introduction SSB 3131 to the Iowa Legislature. Defunding libraries, removing the will of the voter to determine how their libraries are governed, and essentially encouraging the dissolution of Library Boards is an insult to the residents of Iowa. Libraries are many things to many people, but most importantly they are institutions governed by the very people that use them. To remove that power from the community is an overreach and a blatant example of just how out of touch certain politicians in this State are from their constituents. Extremism has no place in Iowa and the majority of the good people in our great State simply want commonsense, fair legislation that represents our views, not the outoftouch, selfish machinations of a select few. Iowans deserve better.

**Name:** Amy Blair

**Comment:** Libraries play an ever increasingly important role in our society, no longer just providing books. From serving as community centers to providing education on a wide array of topics through their programming, libraries serve as a place of unity in our communities in an ever divided society. The state of Iowa should be looking at ways to strengthen, not weaken these institutions. I strongly oppose SSB 3131.

**Name:** Kimberly Noles

**Comment:** I am against SSB 3131. Libraries were magical places to me as a child. They let me explore the world by reading. I hate to think of this generation growing up without libraries. It's worth it to give a child imagination and education

**Name:** Alison Cocks

**Comment:** I am against SSB 3131. Libraries are a vital fundamental part of local government. To take local control and funding is out of line by the state. The libraries belong to the community not to state control.

**Name:** Steve Frevert

**Comment:** I am vehemently against SSB 3131. The legislature should focus on real issues like water quality, child care, and improving communities rather than these ridiculous rightwing red herrings. Let the professionals do their jobs and leave library funding ALONE.

**Name:** Kathleen Fiscus

**Comment:** I have read legislative bill SSB3131. Libraries inspire, motivate, encourage, and educate. Have you enjoyed the Council Bluffs Public Library recently? It has a vibrancy and energy that reaches well beyond the building itself. The multitude of

services provided the community, our area residents, even those who cannot travel to the library or prefer to use the library electronically, are vast and extremely well received. Library personnel are educated in their field. To ask someone already focused on municipal matters to take on the immense job of determining what is resident in the library and what else is offered, is doing a great disservice. To also tell a community that funding a library is not required on top of the additional job duties as described, will have a devastating result. I am writing to oppose SSB3131. I encourage you to do so as well. Thank you for this opportunity to express my opinion as a supporter of libraries in Iowa.

**Name:** Bonnie Love

**Comment:** Libraries are crucial for rich and poor , left and right. Now they are internet access to job search and skill building. Keep your hands off our libraries.

**Name:** Carolyn Walker

**Comment:** Libraries are for everyone, whether it's to explore books, learn new games, have a place to hang out as an elderly person, do computer work, warm up on a "cold" day or vice versa, display artwork, get together for a meeting or watch a movie, attend story time, etc., etc., etc. Let's keep supporting them at the local level!!

**Name:** Tyler Ingham

**Comment:** Any legislation that removes local control of libraries is government overreach of the grossest kind. Libraries are the pinnacle of free speech, with access to a wide variety of ideas, educational materials, and programs designed to make citizens smarter and more compassionate, not to mention giving folks a place to go when they are struggling to find employment. Removing local control in favor of state control prevents libraries from providing services necessary to their communities and makes these services worse for everybody. Any legislator in favor of this bill is in favor of making Iowa a worse place for everyone.

**Name:** Rachel Henning

**Comment:** I stand with public libraries and all the services they provide to our communities. I oppose SSB 3131 and ask the committee and members of Congress to vote "No."

**Name:** Sam Helmick

**Comment:** Iowans before us valued literacy and learning which is why they structured in Iowa code for libraries to have secured funding and focused oversight with appointed boards. Iowans before us understood how robust public libraries contribute to economic development, educational and entrepreneurial success, life satisfaction, and civic engagement. Iowans before us understood why the legal liabilities, complex policies, and specialized training inherent to First Amendment services require specific and robust management to successfully and sustainably steward collections, programs, and spaces openly and freely used by the public. This law will close libraries. Those who vote in favor of this bill know that already as it is blatantly obvious and undeniably true. Those who vote in favor of this bill disregard the wisdom of Iowans who came before us. They flout the Iowan who wrote the Library Bill of Rights eighty-five years ago before it became the international standard of free people reading freely. They deny the principle of free information access to all and refuse to let other Iowans resource their values through ratified code or local levy. Those who vote in favor of this bill will be remembered by the impacted communities and by history for what they have done.

**Name:** Janene Krug

**Comment:** I am FULLY AGAINST SSB 3131. As a lifelong library user and now rural library director I see the great value libraries bring to our communities. Iowa libraries are vibrant thriving spaces where people can access information, services, and materials. This bill jeopardizes the rural and city funding needed to provide these services to our citizens. Libraries provide engaging educational programs for early and lifelong

learners, access to technology, material collections and workforce development resources. Without funding, Iowa citizens will lose free access to these services. This bill also and takes away autonomy from library board members. Library board members are the voice of the community and are appointed by the mayor. Library trustees participate in regular training to become knowledgeable about library principles. They are dedicated volunteer citizens who strive to create effective partnerships with city council and the communities they serve. Library board members focus on library matters, allows the city representatives to be able to focus their time and energy on other pressing city issues confident that the needs of the community are being met. This legislation will be devastating to our libraries and the Iowans who rely on library services and programming. Please stop the advancement of this bill.

**Name:** Sophia Joseph

**Comment:** Please leave our libraries alone. We appreciate the service they provide and the way they are managed. I am staunchly against this bill.

**Name:** David Brown

**Comment:** Please don't reduce funding for Public Libraries, and don't make it harder for them to operate and serve the public. I use the West Des Moines library and find the staff to be very helpful.

**Name:** Megan Murphy Salyer

**Comment:** I will say it again here. No. This bill does not solve a problem, it creates new ones. If you are trying to free up municipal budgets, that finger should be directed at yourselves. The state changed the tax balance years ago which created a situation we are in today. So fix that and then we can talk.

**Name:** Wendy Doyel

**Comment:** I am vehemently opposed this bill, this bill would undermine over 500 libraries in the state as well as put them in financial jeopardy. The bill's provision to transfer library board assets to the city represents a potential misallocation of resources. Local library boards are best positioned to allocate funds, ensuring that resources are directed where they are most needed. Cities who are not a part of library day to day life have no idea what is needed or wanted by the people they serve. Diminishing public access to the process of policy development, library funding, and information access advocacy jeopardizes the very existence of these institutions, undermining their ability to serve as essential community hubs. Libraries need to be kept as they are in order to provide the services that are, by some, desperately needed, and by all desperately wanted.

**Name:** Aimee Kampbell

**Comment:** I am utterly disgusted that this bill is even being considered. What happened to local control? This will make library budgets even more precarious and fragile than they already are and further politicize institutions that strive to serve the public good. Library boards, directors and staff are in danger of losing autonomy should this go through!! What will prevent city councils from dipping into the library budget for other uses. I am 100% against this bill!!

**Name:** Apryl Henrichs

**Comment:** I oppose bill SSB 3131. Please keep our public libraries as they are. Libraries play an extremely important role to our communities. Libraries are a gathering place for all ages. Our small towns have great library boards who truly care about their communities. This proposed change is not necessary. Please keep local control over our libraries and leave library funding alone! Thank You!

**Name:** Eric Jennings

**Comment:** I am disheartened that the Iowa legislature has chosen to put forward this bill. It threatens funding libraries that are for everyone, not just a select few who have the money or resources to access information, technology, and/or educational support needed to empower them. I implore you to vote no on moving it forward.

**Name:** Callen DeWit

**Comment:** Legislators need to have faith in the existing systems of library board authority that have established libraries as multiperspective social and educational institutions of public good where anyone's viewpoint is accepted. Citizens need access to all voices and perspectives to make informed decisions and participate intelligently in society. Library boards are made up of citizens who understand and embrace the importance of this role for libraries and are not afraid to let all voices be heard, people who know that neither disagreement nor diversity is dangerous to anyone. This proposed legislation is one of fear and giving control to as few voices as possible, moving away from an educated citizenry in favor of censorship and the stifling of voices certain lawmakers disagree with. Not only is this a shameful attempt to move backwards in the diverse, globalizing 21st century, it goes against the rights and desires of the majority of Iowans. Legislators need to listen to the bulk of their constituents, not just extremists, and fund libraries without restriction so that they can do good in the community, unfettered by ignorance and fear. Vote against SSB 3131 believe in Iowans, and believe in a system proven to work.

**Name:** Jensen Bodholdt

**Comment:** As an Iowan library director, I oppose this bill. This legislation threatens the operational and financial sustainability of communities and their libraries. Diminishing public access to the process of policy development, library funding, and information access advocacy jeopardizes the very existence of these institutions, undermining their ability to serve as essential community hubs. Multiple libraries could close due to this bill. Please keep our libraries safe.

**Name:** Josephine O'Donnell

**Comment:** I oppose SSB3131. These bills are purely cultural and do absolutely nothing to improve Iowans' quality of life and take precious resources and time away from actually working to solve the many real problems in the state such as child care, water quality, rural healthcare, maternal care, strengthening our public education system and so much more. The Republican majority in the Legislature seems to be either held in thrall to the extreme elements of their party who are hellbent on a culture war, or they are taking their orders from outside groups to introduce copycat or model legislation making the rounds of other Republican majority states. Please cut this out and work for Iowans!

**Name:** Berleen Wobeter

**Comment:** After learning about this bill and reading comments I contacted my local library. They were unaware of this bill. Then I contacted other libraries in Tama Co to inform them. How sad legislation is proposed and stakeholders have been omitted from the process. We need to do better

**Name:** Suzanne Miller

**Comment:** As a library board member for many years and a retired academic librarian, I stand firmly against SSB 3131. Library boards know what their local libraries need and are excellent stewards of their financial and physical resources. I am fearful of what would happen if library management was turned over to the cities. A city council has too many other issues they are dealing with and may not consider or know what is in the best interest of the library. Iowa has a good system that works, why are we looking to change it.

**Name:** Megan Murphy Salyer

**Comment:** I will say it again here. No. This bill does not solve a problem, it creates new ones. If you are trying to free up municipal budgets, that finger should be directed at yourselves. The state changed the tax balance years ago which created a situation we are in today. So fix that and then we can talk.

**Name:** Diane Panfil

**Comment:** As a current Library Director, former Library Board Trustee, and lifetime library user, I am strongly opposed to SSB 3131. Such a drastic measure threatens the operational and financial sustainability of communities and their libraries. Local library boards are dedicated, trained volunteers who are best positioned to allocate funds, ensuring that resources are directed where they are most needed and will best serve their communities. While our current City Council is very supportive of our library, that may not always be the case. And I can guarantee that they do not need, or want, the added responsibility of monitoring the daytoday operations of running a library. Our local library offers services to those in our community (approximately 1500 residents), surrounding communities, and surrounding rural areas. Libraries provide access to information, technology, entertainment, and cultural enrichment. Libraries are way more than just books they have become community centers and are often a vital part of smaller communities. Our library offers a variety of programs for adults and children of all ages. In the past 2 years we have had over 10,500 attendees at free programs! Not bad for a small town!If this bill moves forward, Iowans lose, and no one wins. Please stop bill SSB 3131 from moving forward.

**Name:** Sharon Dendurent

**Comment:** Stop the nonsense. Leave our libraries alone. Dump bill 3131.

**Name:** Donetta Stewart

**Comment:** I would like to state my emphatic opposition to this bill. I am the director of a small rural library and this could have catastrophic consequences to Iowa libraries and all that we stand for free and equal access to information, ideas, programs, and resources. The effect of SSB 331, as written, will strip Iowa public library boards of their independent authority, will transfer library board assets to the city, and will immediately eliminate the local mandate to support libraries financially. It opens the door to many libraries having to close. Support freedom, support quality of life, support libraries that are doing their best under already difficult circumstances to give their communities what they need STOP THIS BILL.

**Name:** Michael May

**Comment:** I am opposed to SSB 3131 because it will make it more difficult for local library boards to resist censorship, and it will endanger public library funding.A similar effort was rejected a few months ago by voters in Pella, Iowa. After the local library board decided against removing one LGBTQ book that a few people were politicizing, a ballot measure was added in an attempt to give control of the public library to city officials. The measure failed because Pella voters do not want their mayor or city council to have the power to ban library books, or to have an incentive to close their community's library for political purposes.SSB 3131 does just this. Instead of bringing communities together by promoting books and reading for everyone, it encourages censorship and turns local public libraries into divisive political battlegrounds.

**Name:** Andrew Hoppmann

**Comment:** I want to express my strong opposition to this bill SSB3131, which aims to alter the governance and funding structure of Iowa's public libraries. Libraries play a vital role in their communities, serving as educational hubs, providing resources for job seekers, and offering programming for all age groups. The SSB 3131 threatens the autonomy and effectiveness of local library boards, potentially leading to closures and hindering access to information. Libraries are essential for fostering education,

inclusivity, and community engagement, and this bill is an unnecessary and harmful interference in the well-established local control of libraries.

**Name:** JOHN CARR

**Comment:** I am opposed to SSB 3131. Libraries have been and should continue to be one of the best sources of information, meeting like-minded individuals, and providing an array of books for all genres. Taking away local control will only lead to further book banning, reduce literacy, and allow Republicans to further control Iowan's minds.

**Name:** Matt McKee

**Comment:** I am against SSB 3131. I have used our public library since I was in elementary school, and my children also spent a lot of time at library programs. Our library provides great resources to our community, and having adequate funding to build the collection, plan and implement programming, and provide computers for public use is just as important as other public services like the police and fire department. Our library board does a tremendous job, and should continue to be allowed to do so.

**Name:** Alan Julius

**Comment:** As a library board member in my 12th and final year of service (we are allowed to serve for up to two 6-year terms) it is with grave concern that bill SSB3131 would limit or eliminate library board authority altogether. After serving on many boards in our community for the past 35 years, I can say without hesitation, that the library board is one of the most vital boards for advancing the growth and progress of our community. Much of the board's work involves informing our city council on the changing needs of our community and the library's responsibility to adapting to and serving those changing needs. I fear that city councils will be making much less informed decisions concerning our public libraries, without such input from the library board, if in fact the board's authority becomes restricted or eliminated altogether. I urge your committee members, before they consider voting on this bill, to please attend one of their local library board meetings or our library board (which meets on the 1st Wednesday of each month). See for yourself what an essential asset your local public library board is for your community. Thank you.

**Name:** Eden Athena Moad

**Comment:** I am completely against SSB 3131. I grew up using library services before I knew how valuable they were. As a child I read book after book that my parents couldn't afford to buy me. As a teenager, I read book after book and participated in programs after programs. Programs that made a huge difference in my life by giving me a space to make friends and meet people my age while cultivating my relationships with the librarians I got to see all the time. As an adult, the public library is one of the few remaining free spaces that does not require purchase for entry. I am able to find a home in a city or town I find myself in as long as I am within library business hours. All this bill does is take away levy dollars that will slash library resources and could lead to shorter hours, less new books, less programs, and less services that some people rely on to survive. Additionally, one of the reasons I feel so at home in a library is because of how lovingly they are taken care of not only by those that work there, but by those that help lead it on a Board of Directors. Taking away local power from people that clearly love what they've chosen to take care of only exhibits a power grab and a misunderstanding of what a Board of Directors can do for a library and community. This bill is horrifying and I hope the state government sees fit to pass on it.

**Name:** Athelda Jones

**Comment:** Please do not pass this bill. Libraries are the cornerstones of communities and a means of escape from boredom for youth. One of my favorite memories is after having read through my favorite genre of books in my rural high school I was able to visit the city library the next larger town down the road. (Sci-Fi/Fantasy) I cherished

being able to check out books there because my family could not afford the number of books to keep my need to read satisfied. Isn't that beautiful? Our youth deserve the same joy.

**Name:** Laura Hoover

**Comment:** SSB 3131 discounts the hard work of the thousands of Iowans who serve on their local Library Board each year and have for over 150 years. Library Boards are made up of members of the community served by each of Iowa's independent community Libraries. They are parents, seniors, businessmen, daycare providers, students. And they are all dedicated workers, volunteering their time to guarantee that their library meets the needs of ALL members of their local community, stressing the unique needs of each of their own local community. I urge you to vote no on SSB 3131 and honor the Iowans who recognize the value Libraries bring to their communities and have worked to retain that value for the last 161 years since Keokuk founded the first Iowa Library in 1861.

**Name:** Laura Reinders

**Comment:** I am against SSB 3131. The local public library is critical to the community and the community college in our small town. To remove any funding would be detrimental to the operation of the library. Our library board is comprised of people that have knowledge of resources and the community. They need to be the ones making decisions that keep our library relevant and updated. Please reconsider this proposed bill.

**Name:** Kim Kietzman

**Comment:** Library Boards are already chosen by the mayor and approved by Council. Libraries work to ensure that their boards represent the community. Circumventing voters by putting selection control in the hands of politicians, a power they could give to themselves is the antithesis of democracy and the 1st Amendment.

**Name:** Jessica Brimeyer

**Comment:** I am AGAINST this bill. Our communities NEED libraries and the access to its resources. Passing this bill would be a disgrace.

**Name:** Kathleen Breitenbach

**Comment:** Public libraries encompass the very heart of democracy. They are open to all, serving anyone regardless of background, beliefs, or political affiliation. SSB 3131 politicizes libraries, library funding, and imperils essential library functions by changing "shall" to "may" regarding percent of property tax funds designated for libraries, and by giving the city council the ability to make significant changes into how their local libraries function, and not only allowing but instructing cities to take everything a library board has on and after July of 2025 could easily be the end of public libraries in the state of Iowa. Iowans deserve better. Defunding libraries, especially when other organizations are cutting customer service and support staff and hours to save money and instead sending their customers to their local libraries to have someone there try to help them, makes an already difficult problem worse. Iowa has a strong literacy rate, but that's in part due to extensive work by libraries. I urge everyone to consider the real impact this bill would have, and prioritize people over scoring cheap political points in an election year.

**Name:** Linda Erickson

**Comment:** It seems as though our Republican legislators are attempting to control public access to information by taking away local control from library boards and school boards. Public schools and local libraries are the heart of communities and should be supported by our legislators, not undermined. An educated and wellinformed public is essential to democracy.



**Name:** Carin Bringelson

**Comment:** Please join me in opposing SSB 3131. Public Libraries are the backbone of a civil society and civic engagement. They are one of the few public spaces where peoples are encouraged to consider multiple perspectives. There is something for everyone at the public library. There is no need to try to fix something that is not broken. Please oppose SSB 3131 so that public libraries can stay strong.

**Name:** Ray Pun

**Comment:** SSB 3131 will threaten funds for libraries serving Iowans. We are talking about access to information and technology, community engagement, educational and literacy programs, and workforce and small business development efforts. Public libraries in Iowa are connectors to information resources for their communities. Please visit your local library and witness the important work that is happening. Please reconsider this proposed bill.

**Name:** Scott Brown

**Comment:** Introduction of SSB 3131 to the Iowa Legislature is a terrible mistake. Removing governance from the existing library boards is insulting and another example of elected officials arbitrarily attempting to dismantle a system that is working properly. Placing library operating policies in the hands of people that in many cases, do not have any clue about what libraries do for their communities is inappropriate and appears to be catering to the vocal partisan minority. Furthermore expropriating assets that were given to the library boards is little more than outright theft. Legislators in Iowa should be looking at ways to strengthen, not weaken libraries.

**Name:** Chelsea Sims

**Comment:** I join all of those commenting here to oppose this bill. Our libraries are democratic institution that must be protected. Vote no.

**Name:** Nancy Brown

**Comment:** Vote NO for SSB 3131The people of Iowa want commonsense. Local libraries help improve communities. Local support is crucial. Local library boards and foundations understand where the needs are greatest. Please vote NO to this bill.

**Name:** Molly Angstman

**Comment:** Please do not pass SSB 3131. Iowans love their libraries!

**Name:** Julia Bauder

**Comment:** Respect the hard work and dedicated service of Iowa's volunteer library boards. Don't pile more work on city councils whose members don't have time to become experts on library services, in addition to all of their other responsibilities. Vote no on SB 3131.

**Name:** Luke Schut

**Comment:** Our libraries are just fine asis, thank you. Keep your hands off this and let towns handle their own local services.

**Name:** Jeri Woodward

**Comment:** I am not in favor of SSB 3131. This bill represents a blatant attempt to take control of public libraries out of the hands of the people, removing local control in favor of state control. The libraries in rural areas are the hub of their towns and provide so many services to the local communities.

**Name:** Nathan Clark

**Comment:** I lament that such a bill has even been proposed. Why seek to destroy among the wisest and forward seeing legislation in the Iowa Code? Probably to suit the

shortsighted whims of capricious politicians, for what else could result from this bill that usurps local control and the will of the voters? That Iowa is blessed with over 540 libraries in a state our size is testament to the fact that what is on the books works. Why seek to hollow out our smalltowns even more? Make no mistake, libraries will be lost if this bill is made into law. That should be a tragedy we strive to avoid. Likewise, let us strive to defeat this calamitous proposed legislation.

**Name:** Becky Heil

**Comment:** I am writing to express my dismay with SSB3131. This bill would destroy public libraries in Iowa, by taking away their only means of funding. Libraries today serve as the community hub in small towns all across our state. They are a place for seniors to get together and be with other people. They are a place for new moms to meet and learn about their children. Libraries are a safe place for teens to hang out with other teens. New adults can learn about budgeting or how to can vegetables at the library. Families with no access to technology at home can use computers and the internet and find staff to support them. Libraries are vital to keeping small towns alive and thriving and to destroy their funding mechanism will be detrimental to those small towns. It is also important to keep them out of the political sphere, by keeping independent library boards.

**Name:** Ellen Bell

**Comment:** This proposed bill is incredibly disappointing and disturbing. I urge you to reject it. Public libraries are functioning just fine as they are, and the government has no place in determining what its citizens should and should not read. This kind of nonsense is something that belongs in a communist state or dictatorship, not a free country.

**Name:** Gerhardt Lachnitt

**Comment:** Please do not support this bill. What benefit is there to defunding libraries? Don't allow that to be an option.

**Name:** Jason Burke

**Comment:** Aside from the ideological concerns that many commenters have voiced here, most city councils are not staffed appropriately or interested in taking on this additional responsibility. I oppose this bill, there are many more practical concerns that our cities need to address.

**Name:** Brianna Lyons

**Comment:** I am entirely opposed to this bill. Public libraries are vital for the health and wellbeing of the communities they serve and should be maintained and guided by experts who understand the needs of their patrons rather than by political interests.

**Name:** Chris Kiefer

**Comment:** I am writing to express my extreme disapproval of SSB 3131. This Act is a transparent attempt to centralize control of our state's libraries under city councils in order to more easily force them to bow to political pressure to censor materials on topics considered politically unsuitable by a certain cadre of elected officials. It further goes on to make it possible for city councils to defund these public institutions by allowing them to strike the property tax assessment that funds them. Public libraries are essential parts of our communities, providing a public space that does not require a monetary cost of patrons to exist within, a rarity in these days where playgrounds, parks, theaters, and malls further restrict patronage, while also serving as a resource for developing educated populations. They are nonpartisan institutions that reflect the essential equality of citizens, and should not be subject to partisan political control, no matter how much our State's Republican party feels entitled to force its opinions as matters of fact.

**Name:** Craig Neises

**Comment:** Iowa GOP: We prefer small government. (Aside: Small enough to fit in our hands and do our bidding.) Leave libraries, and so many other things, alone.

**Name:** Tari Deiters

**Comment:** I strongly oppose SSB3131. Libraries in Iowa provide so many benefits to all Iowans: access to resources, technology, the arts, a place to meet others and learn, a shelter or safe place, activities for the young as well as the old. They are vital to the wellbeing of a community. Once again the Party who professes freedom is showing it wants only to take it away. The libraries, their boards and their funding should remain independent and local as they are now. Please vote No and do not pass this bill. Do what is right for the people of your state.

**Name:** Megan Klein-Hewett

**Comment:** I am writing in opposition to SSB 3131. This bill will defund our state's public libraries, and likely close many of our remaining small libraries. Further, placing governance control in the hands of city council, rather than an independent library board, creates political partisanship in libraries the very thing that governance by an independent library board is supposed to avoid. Public libraries provide materials, programming, and space for all community members, and an independent library board is vital to maintaining that mission.

**Name:** Sheila Schofer

**Comment:** Please stop SSB 3131. Public Libraries are overwhelmingly valued in their communities, because they serve such a wide reach of people and are a proven good investment. Library Boards are representative of and responsive to their communities. They serve as a safeguard against short sighted budget cuts, devastating defunding of a vital public good, and unnecessary, politically motivated censorship.

**Name:** Tricia Kane

**Comment:** I strongly object to SSB 3131. If passed, this bill will have a devastating impact on Iowa libraries and the communities that they serve. If funding is eliminated, that will without a doubt force the closures of libraries and a reduction in the valuable services that they provide. Libraries should remain under the local control of trustees who are appointed and who are well versed in how to allocate resources and best determine the services that will benefit their local community. Please don't pass this bill!

**Name:** Keira Sprague

**Comment:** I oppose SSB 3131. Limiting funding to our local libraries and/or changing who controls material would be a huge mistake. You are underestimating how important libraries are to residents. They are sacred havens used for research or leisure purposes, homework, job searches, Internet access. They should remain uncensored especially since our school censorship has risen abruptly. I believe our communities need more library funding, not less. I have seen for myself how important our small town library is utilized, so much so that our neighboring town just built a library for themselves. Please oppose this bill.

**Name:** Allan Ashland

**Comment:** The voters of Iowa are becoming more and more dissatisfied with the attempts by some of our elected officials to direct local control of our institutions to state and city governments. Our public libraries have existed and flourished under the current system. It is just one more attempt to by our governor and her donors to shove their agenda down our throats. The voters of Iowa are watching and will vote to protect Iowan's rights. Vote no on Bill SSB 3131

**Name:** Laura Blaser

**Comment:** I vehemently oppose SSB 3131! This is not a bill that represents the public's best interest. All across Iowa, the quality of the essential services that our libraries provide will be diminished, if not cut out all together if this bill goes through. Local needs would be best served by the local library boards that already exist. Please vote no on SSB 3131.

**Name:** Martha Herzberg

**Comment:** I am opposed to SBB 3131. With SSB 3131, Iowans lose. Iowans lose access to free public service from appointed board members. Iowans lose local control of their libraries. This bill will defund and politicize libraries and does more harm than good to libraries and the communities they serve.

**Name:** Jamie Noack

**Comment:** I am in sound opposition to SSB 3131! Public libraries in Iowa are a hub for the community. They are a place where everyone is welcome to meet, learn and grow. The Library is where people meet for coffee. The Library is where children learn to love books through story times and programs. The Library is where people learn new skills including everything from how to turn on a computer and use a mouse to how to knit a sweater. The Library is where people get help applying for jobs. The Library is where a resident can borrow a mobile hotspot when the internet goes out in their neighborhood. The Library is where residents can find a food pantry when they need some extra help. And The Library is where people can SSB 3131 puts The Library at serious risk of funding cuts while threatening intellectual freedom that is at the core of it's mission. This bill provides no benefit to the residents of Iowa. It only serves to politicize library services.

**Name:** Allie Borgerding

**Comment:** SSB 3131 threatens our community's control over our libraries. It undermines the authority of local residents to manage their own libraries. Remember, libraries offer much more than just books! They offer early literacy programs, educational programs, support for job seekers, and much more. Let's stand against SSB 3131 to preserve our local say in shaping our library services.

**Name:** Jill Kimpson

**Comment:** I oppose SSB 3131 this bill is completely unneeded; it does not make sense for the city council to take over the library board and property, and will only cause a ripple effect of future issues that will require further unneeded legislation. Stop trying to fix what is not broken and realize that making these kinds of changes is not what your constituents or the public wants or remotely needs.

**Name:** Stacy Volmer

**Comment:** Im strongly opposed to SSB 3131! Vote NO!

**Name:** Jennifer Proctor

**Comment:** Please vote no. Libraries are essential for the education of the communities they serve and need to remain independent.

**Name:** Fran Mapel

**Comment:** I am vehemently opposed to SSB 3131. Our library provides wonderful services to people of all ages, infants to senior citizens. We are only one of two libraries in the state that is certified sensory inclusive. There are rooms available for those needing a place to study or meet with others, people use the computers and library assistance to job hunt. Not only are books available, but there are also DVDs, apps to check out music or movies. We have a create space where people can learn to sew, or crochet and knit. There are STEM opportunities for school children. Libraries are often listed as an amenity for people moving into an area. Our library is truly open to everyone and people USE the library. Please do not pass this bill.

**Name:** Jennifer Jordebrek

**Comment:** I am shocked and extremely disappointed in SSB 3131. Passage of this bill will lead to many unintended consequences for every single Iowan and none of them will be for the betterment of our communities. Defunding libraries will restrict access to all the resources and materials they provide, close many of them, and is a slippery slope that needs to be avoided at all costs. Local and independent control of libraries need to remain with library boards and not given to city councils, who do not have the time nor expertise to properly support libraries like our boards currently do. This is a move to politicize our libraries. Please vote NO!

**Name:** Christen Sherwood

**Comment:** I am disgusted by the introduction SSB 3131. This bill is an insult to the residents of Iowa. Libraries are for the people, not to be governed by the few Extremist out there who are afraid of Free speech and thought. This legislation has no place in Iowa or anywhere in the US. Im embarrassed that this has become an issue, but it's one I will fight to contain.

**Name:** Paula Thome

**Comment:** I am firmly opposed to this bill. Libraries as many have said are the great equalizers. Please leave libraries alone. We really must stop finding solutions to created problems.

**Name:** Christen Sherwood

**Comment:** I am disgusted by the introduction SSB 3131. This bill is an insult to the residents of Iowa. Libraries are for the people, not to be governed by the few Extremist out there who are afraid of Free speech and thought. This legislation has no place in Iowa or anywhere in the US. Im embarrassed that this has become an issue, but it's one I will fight to contain.

**Name:** Kelly Ashworth

**Comment:** I do not support SSB 3131. Libraries provide a free resource for citizens.removing the library boards and the ability to levy taxes to support libraries is another step toward destroying democracy and the rights of citizens to further themselves. Vote No!

**Name:** Susie Petra

**Comment:** PUBLIC libraries are as foundational to a free, democratic country as is PUBLIC education. Our local communities are invested in making our local libraries places of community inclusiveness, functioning to bind our communities, in expansive, necessary ways. It is unthinkable that an attempt is being made to strip Iowans of civic power, of local input, of local direction. Our Library Boards consist of local individuals who are committed to the communities they serve. I am strongly, absolutely, opposed to SSB 3131.

**Name:** Virginia Blair

**Comment:** Please do not change our wonderful public libraries. They are great the way they are!!

**Name:** Stadlman Rebecca

**Comment:** Please do not pass this bill!!! Iowans love our libraries. It is vital to keep them in the hands of professional librarians and their boards. They are trained and must get continuing education. City councils will lose that expertise and can become politicized. Libraries are vital to free speech and democracy!!

**Name:** Anna Phelps

**Comment:** My name is Anna Phelps. I am an active voter that resides in Waukee, Iowa. I also

am a Trustee for the Waukee Public Library. I strongly oppose Senate bill SSB3131. This bill would shift oversight of our libraries from library trustee volunteers to city councils. Library trustees volunteer their time to ensure that our public libraries remain well funded, well managed, and used and valued by our cities' residents. Library trustees also receive board education to learn about the role of libraries in our community, service statistics, trends, policies, and much more. This continuing education is required for accreditation with the Iowa Library Association. Library trustees understand both how libraries function and the diverse needs of our local community. I am very concerned that City Councils will not have the same knowledge base to oversee the public libraries in their community. They most certainly will not have the focus and dedicated time that our Library trustees offer today as they have a wide variety of other matters on their plate. The bill also makes the property tax levy that goes to libraries optional instead of mandatory. Libraries need predictable and steady revenue streams to meet the needs of our communities. This subtle change in wording threatens the operational and financial sustainability of communities and their library. Library operations and services rely on these levies. Without them, some libraries will be forced to close or greatly diminish the services they offer their communities. If passed, this bill would transfer library board assets to cities. I believe local library boards are best positioned to allocate funds and assets judiciously. As noted before, we understand both the needs of our libraries and our local communities and can ensure that library resources are allocated where they are most needed. In summary, I strongly oppose Senate bill SSB3131. Since you are on the subcommittee for this bill, I would very much like to understand your position and your reasoning behind this position. Thank you for your public service and your time in reading this email.

**Name:** Karen Burns

**Comment:** I am vehemently opposed to SB3131. A public library's purpose is to serve the people of the community, and the library board is critical to setting policy and fiscal priorities. As a consultant for the state's regional library system (in its various permutations) for 30 years (retired) I can assure you that local boards' governance of the public libraries serve the community's best interests and help to insulate the library and its services from political influence. Staff and boards are in the best position to determine the needs of the community and how the library can meet them, as well as how to meet the challenges of providing such vital services. This proposal would seriously damage the incredible service that public libraries provide to the people of Iowa.

**Name:** Julie Huiskamp

**Comment:** I grew up in Keokuk and received my first library card at age 4 when I could write my full name. In the intervening 63 years, Iowa libraries have provided me and my family with information, entertainment, programming, and a place of solace. The library trustees I have known and worked with have been dedicated to the free, open exchange of information and ideas for everyone and have performed their duties, many for years on end, with fervent dedication and without compensation. SSB 3131 is chilling. If passed and implemented, Iowa's public libraries could lose their public funding and cease to be governed by individuals who are dedicated to intellectual freedom and community vitality. Why? Iowa's libraries are not broken. This bill should not move out of subcommittee. It has no merit.

**Name:** Lori Lyon

**Comment:** Local control? Small government? Do you truly believe this, because it appears you're proposing involvement in every aspect of a free society. Our library boards require local control. Anything otherwise indicates we need to begin learning Russian.

**Name:** Michelle Berends

**Comment:** I oppose Senate Study Bill 3131, which, if passed, will significantly undermine the

autonomy of over 500 public library boards across the state. The proposed legislation not only threatens the integrity of public library governance but also jeopardizes the vital funding that sustains our libraries and their invaluable services.

**Name:** Christine Faas

**Comment:** Our public library serves the community in extraordinary ways. Our board has decided to make things like hot spots, printers, computer help time, language learning hours, Storytime etc, help individuals in our community as well as helping create bonds between them. Library boards have the advantage of focusing on those services which they understand fully from their connection to the library. I was lucky to be hired by our public library to lead family music classes which were free to the community and promote brain development and family bonding. If these decisions were left to general city officials, they would likely choose to balance the needs of the library with the needs of the entire public system, road & equipment maintenance, etc. They also don't have the time to know as deeply what ways the library can serve the community when they have to balance their time with so many other details. Keep libraries funded. Let the community members who know, love, and value them be the administrators of their funding. Thank you for serving our communities as legislators and taking the time to learn about how citizens feel about these issues.

**Name:** Kathryn Atkinson

**Comment:** I am adamantly against this bill!! WHAT IS HAPPENING TO US HERE IN IOWA???? Leave our public libraries alone!!

**Name:** Deborah Loger

**Comment:** I am opposed to SSB 3131. I have been visiting the Odebolt Public Library for nearly 70 years and just recently was appointed to the library board of trustees. Our library is a valuable asset to our community. People not only use it for research, proctoring exams, reading and Internet access. I've also served on the city council. City councils have enough on their plate without adding something else. Library staff and board members keep our eye on what the public needs and wants. Libraries need the funding received from the city and county; it's essential to keep the doors open. Please reconsider SSB 3131. Deborah Loger

**Name:** Becky Wehrspann

**Comment:** More than 7 years ago, as a Public Library Trustee board member, I fought for the tax levy dollars to benefit the library in my community. Now at the hands of some illconceived legislation, we risk losing our funding as well as our autonomy as a public library board. Please say NO to SSB 3131 and keep local money and decisions in the hands of its own community members.

**Name:** Wendy Blake

**Comment:** I am against this bill. Our public libraries are a crucial part of our Iowa communities. They provide a rich source of reading materials and activities for all ages. Using taxes to support these wonderful libraries is a very good investment for Iowa.

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**Comment:** I am against this bill. Our public libraries are a crucial part of our Iowa communities. They provide a rich source of reading materials and activities for all ages. Using taxes to support these wonderful libraries is a very good investment for Iowa.

**Name:** Jack Freeman

**Comment:** I am against the SSB 3131. Please leave libraries the way they are. They are an important part of every community. Don't mess with what is an excellent public asset.

**Name:** Sara Schany

**Comment:** This is a terrible and pointless bill to try to get passed. Leave the libraries alone! It is

a safe place for people of all ages to gather information, access education, free resources for those who need it, they are crucial in every city! Please use some common sense when writing these things!

**Name:** Levi Baber

**Comment:** This is a disgusting attempt to disenfranchise voters from control of their public resources. Libraries are the backbone of many small towns, and this would put them in jeopardy of dissolution without public input and concentrate that power in the hands of a small number of city council members.

**Name:** Megan Dial-Lapcewich

**Comment:** I am a lifelong library user, former library director, and current member of the Oxford Public Library Board of Trustees. It is an honor and a privilege to serve my community on the library board. Our small town is incredibly fortunate to have a library that provides free programs and services for all people for free. We rely heavily on the tax levy to fund the salary for our sole staff person. Our director is everything for our library: grant writer, tech support, programmer (for all ages), collection developer, cataloguer, marketing guru, and on and on. Without the levy to pay for our director's position, our library would not be able to exist as it does as a state accredited and highly valuable community resource. Our programming and collection budgets are entirely grantfunded we must continue to receive levy support beyond the grant funds we receive. Our small city also has a city council that has more than enough pressure on them to support our town as it grows and expands; they should not and do not need one more thing added to their plate in the form of overseeing the library. Volunteer led library boards are vital in that they allow libraries to maintain intellectual freedom separate from government agendas. Libraries are essential to communities. They are one of the only remaining free places where anyone no matter their background can go for support, help, resources, information, and joy. I am a mother of two toddlers; my sons deserve to grow up with a library down the street. They deserve a library that is wellfunded and supported. They deserve to have access to any book or movie or game that they want. They deserve to attend weekly story times and summer programs. All children, and all adults for that matter, deserve free, fair, funded libraries. I vehemently oppose this bill. It is not in the best interest of any Iowan. It will do so much damage to many communities especially small, rural towns like my own, which rely so much on the levy funds in order to simply exist.

**Name:** Lisa Mellecker

**Comment:** I am against SSB3131 as it endangers both the financial and political independence of Iowa's public libraries. Libraries are one of the few institutions left that provide a free place for community members to gather and learn. By stripping them of necessary local funding and leadership independent of partisan politics, we are doing a disservice to our communities now and for future generations.

**Name:** Parker Smith

**Comment:** I am against SSB 3131. Libraries are really important to the community and especially the youth.

**Name:** Danielle Dickinson Thaden

**Comment:** I strongly oppose SSB 3131. As a library worker, I have seen firsthand how libraries convert a small community investment into tremendous public good that reaches far beyond access to books. Libraries provide a free place to gather without any expectation to make a purchase, making it a goto for gatherings, including DHS supervised visitations. Libraries provide public access to computers, internet, and printing services. On top of that, our library offers almost daily educational and cultural programs for everyone, from our youngest to oldest citizens. All of that for the relatively tiny investment of a few cents per thousand dollars. Making this



funding optional jeopardizes all the public good libraries provide. Please say no to these changes.

**Name:** Corey Melhus

**Comment:** As a lifelong library patron, former Friends board president, and current Trustee, I can attest that the current funding and oversight mechanisms governing community libraries in Iowa already result in the most efficient and beneficial use of the public dollar for the public good. The proposed changes will result in a severe disruption to this balance, negatively impacting critical community services and reducing community visibility and input into library matters.

**Name:** Claudia Tillman

**Comment:** Local libraries are a HUGE part of Iowas communities. They provide all levels of literature, childrens programs internet services, and so much more! Public libraries are a vital part of Iowas towns and cities. Vote NO on SSB 3131. Do the right thing for Iowans!

**Name:** Angela Pilkington

**Comment:** I am adding my voice to the comments to say as a lifelong Iowan, who grew up using libraries in many Iowa cities, and used them for more than books, I strongly oppose SSB3131. Over the years, I have learned a great deal about how libraries work with city governments and within their communities. This knowledge is severely missing from the proposed legislation; if the knowledge of Library Boards was known by the presenters, they would know that stripping cities of their autonomous library boards, would be disastrous for our communities. Library Boards are made up of nine community members appointed by busy city councils, who are already burdened with work. These nine members work within the open meeting rules set forth by the City and State, they report their work to the city council. Library Trustees go through many trainings and continuing education to understand and complete their vital work. Ask any current or past city council members when they would have time to add in the work of nine trustees that they appointed to do that work. Libraries are the busiest part of a community. More people go to the library than to city hall. More Iowans would be without access to free materials, programs, computer access, a safe place, and more if SSB3131 goes through. Please don't make unnecessary legislation to get books removed. Don't create unnecessary work for overworked city councils. I implore you to reconsider this legislation and to spend a lot more time learning about library boards and libraries here in Iowa and how they impact your constituents. Libraries are for everyone.

**Name:** JeNel Allen Barth

**Comment:** I have some serious concerns with a new bill that was very recently submitted by Senator Jesse Green; SSB 331. As we have discussed before these bills have real life repercussions for the citizens of our area. The effect of SSB 331, as written, will strip Iowa public library boards of their independent authority, will transfer library board assets to the city, and will immediately eliminate the local mandate to support libraries financially. Public Library Boards of Trustees provide focus, transparency, and broader representation to the operation of your public library. With SSB 3131, cities will be forced to choose between funding police and fire services or funding libraries. Iowans will immediately lose their library levy dollars. Iowans may lose access to free public service from appointed board members. Please note that this bill will not make the work of city management easier. It may foist off specialized training, focus, time, attention, and advocacy given to libraries through their Boards of Trustees to city staff with fewer resources than ever before. I am asking you to look into this further and question the validity in rejecting Iowa Code for public libraries and their boards as it stands now as well as the devastating results of taking away valuable funding that was voted on by the citizens of my town. Centerville wanted a special levy that supported the public library and our vote was cast aside.

Frankly, this is unacceptable."

**Name:** Amanda Sand

**Comment:** I am vehemently opposed to SSB 3131. SSB 3131 threatens the local civic power of Iowans by undermining Library Boards' authority. These boards, comprised of dedicated individuals, supported by trained state and local staff, are vital for maintaining the autonomy and stability of public libraries. The bill risks the future of libraries as essential community hubs, and state leaders should respect the expertise of these local boards in addressing local needs.

**Name:** Lauren Crowe

**Comment:** I am AGAINST SSB 3131. I implore my elected officials to listen to the outcry from their districts.

**Name:** Kari Heggen

**Comment:** Libraries are the lifeblood of our communities. A free place to be without worry, opportunities to learn and grow without cost, the list of things I have gained from public libraries over my lifetime is endless. I'm ashamed this bill is even being considered especially with the lack of available resources outside of libraries continuing at an alarming pace. Just because libraries offer things you might not like or want doesn't mean you should take them away from people who do want or like them let alone need them. Do not pass this bill

**Name:** Christine Luedtke

**Comment:** All Iowans deserve funded libraries. I vehemently oppose this bill. It is not in the best interest of any Iowan. It will do damage to many communities especially small, rural towns that rely on the levy funds in order to simply exist.

**Name:** Anne Mangano

**Comment:** I am writing in opposition to SSB3131. In just a few strikeouts and word changes, this bill drastically changes Iowas public library services. Iowa has great public libraries. We are known for it. As an Iowan, it is a fact that Im incredibly proud of. This bill will change all of that. The first is the levy language swap from shall to may, allowing communities to dissolve their public libraries in the hopes of shoring up their general funds (eroded away by a decade of severe property tax reform). Public libraries are critical infrastructure. What do libraries do? Early literacy programs, essential for school readiness. Support for homeschooling parents, childcare centers, and preschools by providing educational books and materials that support curriculum. Provide reliable internet access to rural families. Connect people in crisis with social services, such as shelters, food banks, and tax help. Provide assistance in finding jobs, writing resumes, and filling out applications. Help citizens and residents navigate local government by answering questions about county offices, polling places, and drivers license requirements. Community center with meeting spaces for local groups, such as the Republican caucuses to the League of Women Voters to local economic groups. Provide critical information services and shelter during emergencies. Put on informative and educational programming. Build collections that meet the needs and interests of their residents. Public libraries are a good investment that pays dividends for Iowans. The bill also removes the process of deciding library governancetaking it away from voters and giving it to the citys elective governing body. This change cuts the legs out from under a librarys Board of Trustees. While city governance may appoint library trustee members and decide the librarys overall budget, the Board of Trustees hire the library director and oversee the librarys operational activities, such as programming or collection development. Previous generations knew the importance of this. Libraries are poised to be political. We all know that. We have books on the shelves that make people uncomfortable from any standpoint, political or otherwise. Our meeting rooms can be used by groups that someone may disagree with. That Board of Trustees is there to buffer city government officials. Its there to make the library less political. We live in a

democratic republic, which means there are a lot of differing opinions, offensive and benign, that live in what is essentially a marketplace of ideas. You don't want the city government bogged down arguing over books and who can use what meeting room. Libraries believe in intellectual freedom. This protects both liberal ideas and conservative ones. If you are concerned about liberal censorship of conservative ideas, write a better law that protects the freedom of all ideas, not a law that enshrines the ability of conservative and liberal city governments to politically micromanage the library collection. The public libraries national code of ethics, the Library Bill of Rights, a document written by an Iowan for Iowans during the 1930s and adopted for all Americans, should be an inspiration here. I implore you to read it and read about its history. Slow down and consider such a consequential bill more carefully. Go and visit public libraries across this state. Talk to Iowans, both in rural and urban communities. This bill is a huge mistake and the Iowans will lose something that makes this state incredibly special: its public libraries.

**Name:** Elizabeth Luttrell

**Comment:** I am against this bill. Please do not pass it out of subcommittee.

**Name:** Julie Persons

**Comment:** I am opposed to SSB 3131. Libraries are a wonderful addition to our communities and their board provide the best oversight available. The proposed changes to the board's abilities and the removal of the tax levy would gut these community assets. Libraries go so far beyond just books. According to a 2015 Pew survey, almost two-thirds of adult Americans say that closing their local library would have a major impact on their community. As Pew found, over 90 percent of adults think of public libraries as welcoming and friendly places." SSB 3131 would be a very negative impact on my community and Iowa as a whole.

**Name:** Rachel Mendoza

**Comment:** I am greatly oppose d.to this bill. Our library must be available for evryone. No other place offers what a library can.

**Name:** Anne Tews

**Comment:** I am a librarian in Iowa and do NOT agree with SSB 3131. For one thing, the governor and other state officials say how important local control is to them, passing this bill would go against this claim by officials. Not having an independent Board of Trustees means many changes to how a library is run, most, if not all, are bad changes. If the board is removed then the city can tell library directors which books they are not allowed to purchase. Censorship goes against the First Amendment and Intellectual Freedom. Everyone is free to write what they want and read what they want. If a person does not wish to read a book, and does not want their child(ren) to read a book they will not be forced to read it. However, that does NOT give them the right to prohibit other adults from reading a book or allowing their children from reading it. It's difficult to manage a library on the piddling amounts that City Councils currently give us, saying they "may" fund the library instead of "shall" will mean that they can cut the library budget to nothing or eliminate the library altogether. My mayor is quite proud that he has never read a book in his life, my patrons and I cannot afford allowing him more power to control funding the library. As Andrew Carnegie said, "A library outranks any other thing a community can do to benefit its people. It is the never failing spring in the desert."Thank you.

**Name:** Sheila Chaudoin

**Comment:** I am very much against this bill. The State of Iowa does not need to take this measure. I've worked in libraries for more than 50 years. This is a horrendous bill and I'm getting sick of this Republican Party pushing to take control out of the hands of its citizens. It seems to me they are trying to rob our cities of their budgets that are set aside for our public libraries. They are trying to do the same thing to the Area Education Associations in the state.

**Name:** Wanda Wendt

**Comment:** I am against SSB3131 and any other future bill which cuts funds from public libraries. I grew up in a small Iowa town and visited our library on a weekly basis. As a child (and still today) one of my favorite activities was(is) reading. My hometown library provided access to more books than I ever would have had if that library had not existed. As a resident of Des Moines, I am a regular visitor to the DMPL and take advantage of many of their services including checking out books and DVDs, using their onsite computers, and attending various on site presentations/programs. Without our public library, I could not fulfill my love of reading as I am able to do today! Our public libraries are even more important for our low income families and adults. I strongly urge our legislators to take no actions to reduce services provided through our public libraries. Any cuts made will have long lasting effects, especially on our marginalized populations!

**Name:** Amy Juhnke

**Comment:** SSB3131 is awful. Libraries provide local and state governments an efficient hub for nonpartisan access to voting and voting information, a central and accessible location for employment services and outreach, a source of information, books, music, video, essential preK development tools, and nonpartisan spaces for meeting and collaborating. Regardless of income, everyone can access literature for free research the best refrigerator to buy, learn a new language, plan a vacation, learn how to start a new business, find people like themselves, learn how to invest, find solace in a book and read in a safe place, and on and on. It's an investment in the community, that gives back exponential returns in the development of a healthy and productive community. I can't imagine any Chamber of Commerce would say people would locate to their community if it didn't invest in schools or the very basic a public library.

**Name:** Michelle Wubben

**Comment:** Andrew Carnegie, the great American industrialist and philanthropist, asserted upon no foundation but that of popular education can man erect the structure of an enduring civilization. He also believed strongly that free libraries were the way to support that popular education in communities. He supported this conviction by building over 2,500 libraries throughout the world, including nearly 1,800 in the US, with 101 of them in Iowa. Iowans have supported their libraries since, understanding that they are not only places for personal betterment through continuing education and leisure, but also free spaces for citizens to meet, conduct job searches, and borrow from a whole library of things to improve their lives. Libraries are critical to democracy, providing access to newspapers, books, the internet, and hosting speakers on many subjects. To carry out their mission library staff and their boards of directors must be free to manage the library for the benefit of all in the communities they serve without undue influence. For many people the library is a refuge. Current legislation serves Iowans well, insulating public libraries from the changing whims of vocal minorities which seek to limit other people's access to materials they personally don't like, while still having boards appointed by elected officials. It allows citizens in all communities to receive library services if they desire through a consistent tax levy. To bring libraries under closer political pressure would result in more unequal library services across the state with less access in many areas. It would also incentivize those who seek to pressure elected officials to shut down viewpoints they disagree with. This likely viewpoint discrimination is a disservice to Iowans and would weaken democracy by making it more difficult for citizens to have conversations about issues. Librarians are trained in collection development and library boards have policies in place to see that disagreements about materials can be carefully considered. Local boards understand their communities and work to serve them well. Please allow them to continue to do their work for the benefit of all Iowans, and vote NO on SSB3131.

**Name:** Marianna Haas

**Comment:** Why is this bill being done now when the current system of libraries, boards and cities have worked so well for so many years? Why does the GOP controlled legislature always copy what other GOP controlled states have done? Who wants to cut the mandated funding level of libraries and make it optional? Iowa used to be a top rated state for education. No longer. In our current highly politicized environment, why make the library subject to direct control of a city council? Some communities have suffered through book bans and the harassment of staff. Why would the legislature want to make the administration of a public library even more political?

**Name:** Bill Pitcher

**Comment:** Opposed. Libraries should remain in the control of people who understand and are passionate about the free exchange of ideas and building the community. Moving the management of libraries into fickle desires of politicians turns them into a political football for politicians. No one benefits from this change in management, in the end it would infringe on the role of libraries to support personal productivity and cultural engagement. This bill opens the door for missallocation of library funds for politicians own pet projects or election goals. This is bad legislation and should be voted down.

**Name:** Terri Anderson-Peck

**Comment:** I am opposed to SSB3131. Leave our libraries alone!!

**Name:** Jade Hart

**Comment:** Taking away the authority of independent public library boards and eliminating the required (very small) city levy for libraries is another attack on basic freedoms of Iowans. Library boards serve the public and community interests in a way that city councils alone cannot and should not. They have neither the time, the expertise, nor the interest in governing libraries. Please vote against House bill 3131 and leave library operations alone. The current system is working well.

**Name:** Michelle Hukvari

**Comment:** I am strongly opposed to SB3131. Our public libraries are an invaluable resource that support all members of our communities. Our public libraries support access to learning for all ages through books, internet access, newspapers, magazines, media and information of all kinds. Our public libraries fill social needs as warming centers, career resources, free meeting spaces and social services. These are just a few of the things that public libraries provide and loss of these services would be detrimental to our communities. Please support our communities and our public libraries by voting no to this bill.

**Name:** Peggy Dettmer

**Comment:** I say, No, to SSB3131. The result would defund public libraries, and lose of free public services. It would hurt small rural libraries the most.

**Name:** Misty Urban

**Comment:** This bill will directly and dramatically impair the mission of public libraries in Iowa to provide open and democratic access to information, services, and resources that uphold the healthy exchange of ideas and support of community spaces. Public libraries have long existed as a public resource, indeed a public good, designed to provide access without bias and serve the needs of local constituents. This bill undercuts the ability of libraries to be selfgoverning and selfsustaining, making them answerable not to the needs of the local community but to the agendas and partisanship that have lately hobbled fair civil governance in this state and in this country. Libraries, public education, and universities should now bow to the dictates of elected officials who are bound by party platforms; they should be funded and maintained by taxpayer dollars, they should be governed by their own institutional ethics, and they should be answerable only to the civic body they serve. The Iowa

Legislature needs to focus its efforts on legislature that will improve the life of Iowans, not cut down the pillars of community that have long sheltered and served them. Please reject this bill on every point.

**Name:** Andrew Nostvick

**Comment:** I am against SSB 3131. I'm angered that this is even being considered. Libraries in this state have enough to deal with. A bill that changes how they're funded and how they're controlled does not help matters. Public libraries are essential to Iowa. They're a lifeblood for communities, especially rural ones. I strongly disapprove of this bill.

**Name:** Anita Christensen

**Comment:** I ask you to oppose SSB 3131. I believe public libraries offer an invaluable service to our communities. It is a space to for citizens of all ages to gather with opportunities far beyond books. My kids were great readers and I give a lot of credit to our local public library.

**Name:** Angie Conley

**Comment:** I oppose SSB 3131. I am on the Polk City Library Board of Trustees. Libraries are a valuable asset to our community, providing programs and resources for all ages. Libraries and board members keep in mind what individual communities need and want. Libraries need funding received from both the city and county. Please reconsider SSB 3131.

**Name:** Raleigh Helmick

**Comment:** I am against SSB 3131, it is my belief that this bill is designed to take decision making away from local rural library boards. The people on these boards are made by their local communities to have representation of the communities wanting. Those who would take the ability of these communities to choose those that they believe will carry out what they want for their children, elderly and stude denies them the basic right of representation. I would like to think that the state legislators have enough to deal with that they don't need to the away what the majority want and are handling just fine.

**Name:** Jennifer Hasenmiller

**Comment:** I strongly oppose SB 3131. It appears to be an egregious attempt to strip civic power away from Iowans in choosing who they wish to represent them on their local Library Boards. Additionally, the move to position levy moneys in such a way that they can be easily stripped from local libraries funding is heartless and shortsighted. Libraries provide essential services and provide community building opportunities that would disappear without appropriate funding.

**Name:** Martha McClurg

**Comment:** I strongly oppose SSB 3131. This bill would leave a vital community resource unfunded and has major implications for intellectual freedoms in Iowa. I am a frequent library patron and also library volunteer. The services provided at my library, as well as libraries across the state, are vast and truly do make our state one that cares for all people. Cutting mandatory funding from libraries will directly affect jobs, access to information and technology, and educational opportunities. One of the reasons I love the libraries is because they are vital community hubs that foster lifelong learning, promote literacy, and provide equal access to information for all residents. I can't imagine my own life without a library and know its absence (or even diminishment of services) would leave a huge hole in our state. Investing in libraries is an investment in our states future, as it enhances the quality of life, promotes economic development, and strengthens social cohesion. For these reasons, I urge the committee to vote no to this proposed legislation.

**Name:** Kathryn Fink

**Comment:** Senators Klimesh, Knox, and GreenI would like to urge you to oppose SSB3131 and refrain from moving this legislation forward. Public libraries do so much for communities throughout the state of Iowa they serve not only as a source of information and recreation for people who live here, but a place where Iowans can access the Internet if they're unable to afford it at home. Libraries help preserve the history of our local communities, they help provide tax forms this time of year, and they provide a place for people to gather with their neighbors to stave off loneliness, to learn new skills or information, and make connections with others in their communities. They provide a place for our youngest readers to learn and to get socialization with other kids through attending story hour and other programs. They help kids to keep reading in the summer to fight summer learning loss and we want to make sure that Iowa stays in the top for education in our country. Libraries also serve the needs of homeschooling families who maybe can't afford to purchase books on all of the topics that they need to cover during the school year. Library funding is very important for all of our communities in Iowa, so changing the wording of the bill from "shall levy" to "may levy" will adversely affect all ages of people from every socioeconomic class in our state, especially those in smaller communities. There is also the issue of removing independent public library boards' authority over the library public library boards provide focus, transparency, and broader representation to the operation of public libraries. Public library board members are appointed by local elected officials, and keeping them independent boards makes them insulated from partisan politics. This bill is not needed public libraries have been serving their communities well for a long time. Thank you for your service to the state of Iowa, and thank you for listening.

**Name:** Craig Pfantz

**Comment:** This study bill was brought to my attention by our City Library Director. I serve as Mayor to a community of 1500 citizens. I am somewhat confused with the intent of this bill. The six and three quarter tax levy is a very small amount of the total property tax burden but generates so much good for the community. I would not like to see it become a political pawn that could be terminated on a whim by city councils. Presently I appoint citizens to our Library Board of Trustees which are confirmed by the City Council. We always seem to have numerous people apply for limited positions. This is an anomaly today because volunteerism seems to be at an all time low. I would not welcome a shift of authority from this great group of people. City Councils are burdened with enough responsibilities and do not need more put on their plate, especially in an area they may have little expertise. Thank you for this opportunity to voice my opinion.

**Name:** Rachel Bussan

**Comment:** I work in a public library, and I oppose Senate Study Bill 3131. It removes an important source of library funding. It also harms the ability of library boards to provide local control and judicious application of financial resources.

**Name:** Olivia Comer

**Comment:** I am vehemently opposed to SSB3131! Libraries are the beating heart of a community, and their boards are filled with people who know the needs of that library better than anyone else. This bill is beyond understanding why is this even a discussion? The culture war that's currently being fought over libraries is being taken to the next step. The mere proposition of this bill is terrifying in its implications for the future of libraries everywhere. Iowans love our libraries and know that they are deeply, deeply important public services. Please vote down SSB3131!

**Name:** Sarah Coomber

**Comment:** I oppose SSB 3131. Our communities need libraries and the resources and joy they provide to all. Libraries are a cornerstone of our democracy. Please do not take away local control or funding.

**Name:** Janis Comer

**Comment:** This bill is a clear attempt to wrest local control of public libraries from the communities they serve. It also seeks to remove any remaining independence of entities which strive to serve ALL members of their communities without being a political football. Iowans rely on their libraries for everything from storytimes to jobsearch help, workspaces to meeting places, playtime to coffeetime, and everything in between. Local, independent Library Boards ensure that Iowa libraries are not an afterthought. Local, independent Library Boards are accountable and responsive to the needs of their communities, and are best situated to make decisions that align with the Library's mission. Do not move this bill forward, as it will set Iowa back.

**Name:** Jessica Hoppmann

**Comment:** Please vote NO for SB 3131! Local and especially rural libraries would be detrimentally impacted by this bill. Our local libraries should be governed by local library boards whose members know local issues best and are deeply invested in their communities and their success, including thriving local libraries. Please show your support for libraries (and thus the health of your communities) in your district and vote NO!

**Name:** Katelyn Mathews

**Comment:** I urge you to oppose SSB3131. This bill will have a negative impact on our communities. Libraries provide our communities with so much more than just books. They are places to meet, learn, access internet, and receive help with technology. Libraries serve all ages, toddler through senior citizen, with programs for early literacy, summer reading, science, art, history, and of course books and periodicals. Reducing the amount of funding that libraries receive from levies will have a serious negative impact on the services our libraries can provide to our communities. Further, library boards operate for the good of the libraries. Transitioning these responsibilities to the city council would not be in the best interest of the libraries. Our city councils already have enough on their plates, they do not need the added tasks of overseeing the libraries. Again, please oppose SSB3131.

**Name:** Billie Ruden

**Comment:** I oppose this bill. As a board member for our small but mighty library, I take pride in the ability to assist in providing resources and activities for our community.

**Name:** Colleen Theisen

**Comment:** I am vehemently opposed to this bill. Local public libraries are exactly that local. The Iowa Library Association summed up the problem quite well: "Libraries are essential community resources that play a crucial role in fostering education, intellectual growth, and community engagement. The strength of our libraries lies in the local governance provided by dedicated library boards, whose members understand the unique needs and aspirations of their communities. Stripping library boards of their powers, as proposed in SSB3131, undermines the democratic principles that guide local decisionmaking and diminishes the ability of these boards to tailor services to the specific needs of their communities." Local public libraries need to be able to pay for and control their libraries for their communities. This has worked very well since the very beginning of public libraries in Iowa. No one is asking for this, and the comments demonstrate here how adamantly Iowans do not want this. Spend your time focusing on things that are actually broken. Our local communities already have this covered. Leave our local libraries alone.

**Name:** Kim Cabel

**Comment:** I oppose this bill. My family supports libraries because libraries are there for us: from toddler/family story times, to checking out childrens books to use with students in my profession, to having access to many books we like to read as adults. Libraries



are an important resource to families who may not have access to books in their own homes otherwise. Many libraries would not be able to stay open and free to the public under this bill without funding from the levy. Please support libraries and allow them to continue operating in a way that supports our communities.

**Name:** Eric Saylor

**Comment:** This is an absurd and unnecessary legislative proposal. Libraries are the lifeblood of communities, large and small alike. It is unconscionable that Republican legislators would remove their sources of funding: people rely on libraries not just for books, but for internet access, cultural enrichment, public assistance, civic engagement, and so much more. This is an entirely unnecessary proposal that would only have the effect of making communities worse in multiple ways. It is shameful that any proposal to defund libraries be mooted in the first place; any responsible politician of conscience would stop it before it came out of committee.

**Name:** Allie Smaha

**Comment:** I strongly oppose this legislation. Libraries are a cornerstone of our communities, providing vital access to educational resources, learning, books, entertainment, events for all ages and so much more. They need to continue to be fully funded including through the levy that requires funding, independently operated and able to serve their diverse communities fully and without unnecessary intervention from misguided legislators. Elected officials have no business interfering with library elections nor should they have the ability to prevent the public from having a say in how these vital resources can function and provide services. Please preserve intellectual freedom and our libraries and do not advance this bill.

**Name:** Lesley Wright

**Comment:** I oppose SSB3131. There is a lot of talk these days about freedom and preserving freedom. Local control and local school boards maintain the freedom of communities to use training and expertise to manage libraries well. Asking city councils to do this work adds undue burdens to city governments and ensures libraries will not receive the guidance and funding their communities expect. Give libraries and their boards the freedom to do their important work well.

**Name:** Ryan Smaha

**Comment:** I am not in support of this bill. Local libraries provide an essential public service and should remain governed by the citizens of the community they serve. This bill threatens local government and politicizes a service that Iowans rely on for daily life. Please reject this bill!

**Name:** Kyle Miller

**Comment:** I oppose SSB 3131.

**Name:** Michael Johnson

**Comment:** Hands off our libraries! It is bad enough what you are doing to our schools.

**Name:** Amanda Grimm

**Comment:** I am opposed to SSB3131 on all counts. These language changes open libraries to a dismaying future without funding and governance. First and foremost, Iowa's libraries are a strong public service and institution. For the party proposing small government, it begs the question "if it's not broken, why fix it?" Secondly, library boards and city councils work in tandem for the benefit of all residents and provide a system of checks and balances, a tenet our democracy was founded on. Additionally, the board serves at the mayor's appointment an elected official determines the group of people who can best oversee the service provided to the community. A few slight word changes puts the entire system in jeopardy and forces already overburdened city councils to have to develop expertise in yet another area in order to provide for

its citizens. In many small, rural libraries, library patrons are not always residents of the city, and the library board equalizes representation for those county/rural patrons. In this proposal, only those living within the city of ordinance would have input into the governance of the library (through elections of city officials), leaving entire groups of patrons without any type of representation. I ask that all members of this subcommittee vote no and allow our public libraries to continue their excellent and equalizing service.

**Name:** Lindsey Rupp

**Comment:** Any bill that removes rights from voters and introduces the potential for reduced funding of libraries is incredibly concerning. I do not support this bill.

**Name:** Jennifer Parker

**Comment:** Libraries are so important to our communities for all the reasons others have mentioned. Dont take the freedom and safety of libraries away from our families and communities. Libraries are where the love of reading begins and thrives. Dont fool yourselves into thinking a simple word change doesnt mean much. Libraries have taught us different.

**Name:** Lisa Martincik

**Comment:** I strenuously oppose SSB 3131, which displays either ignorance or disrespect for the effective and vital ways citizens engage with libraries and libraries serve communities. The bill demonstrates a lack of trust in, and disempowers, local populations. Please kill this bill and preserve the voice of the Iowa people and important library services. City councils members also dont need this extra, unasked for, and unanticipated responsibility shifted to them by this unhelpful bill.

**Name:** Marcia Powell

**Comment:** I am providing feedback against this library bill and it's sponsored action of infringement on local control and free speech. Local town people deserve to read the material and have the programs that matter to their constituents. Leave out library, which writes grants and feeds people in the summer, alone. We don't need this attempt to strip away local autonomy

**Name:** Julie Zaugg

**Comment:** The state of Iowa is trying many ways to improve student reading scores. Defunding libraries is not going to help. Think of their summer reading programs, story hour for preschoolers and after school tutoring for older students. In our small rural towns, many senior programs and events are hosted by libraries. It is shocking that this bill proposes bypassing the voters in the decisions about funding and maintaining libraries and selecting board members. Currently the only lobbyist in favor of this bill is concerned more about property taxes than the quality of life in our towns and cities. Please do not let this bill move on.

**Name:** Karen Woodard

**Comment:** Vote No on SSB3131. We need our libraries to have the ability to supply their communities with written material needed and desired by those people who live there. I use the library and depend on it to house the books and offer the help I need to manage my business such as computers, meetings and educational programs.

**Name:** Miller-Jacobs Sarah

**Comment:** I am strongly against SSB 3131. Literacy is a building block to all learning. Libraries fuel this life long skill. Reading to young children to begin their learning journey, finding resources as you read your first biography in school, getting help to create a resume, finding a new recipe as an adult, locating fiction to take you away from lifes stressors, apply for a job, research your families history through genealogical research, learning a new hobby and more. Why would this bill which has potential to

take partial to all funding away from libraries be beneficial to Iowans? As a parent, an Iowan and library worker for 14+ years in three Iowa libraries I ask you to please remove SSB 3131. Thank you.

**Name:** Taylor Brooks

**Comment:** I am against SSB 3131.

**Name:** Michelle Johnson

**Comment:** I am writing to express my wholehearted support for public libraries and the invaluable role they play in our communities. Public libraries are not just repositories of books; they are vibrant hubs that foster knowledge, literacy, and community engagement. Libraries serve as equalizers, providing free access to a wealth of information, educational resources, and cultural materials. They play a crucial role in promoting literacy, lifelong learning, and the development of critical thinking skills. Additionally, public libraries are essential for bridging the digital divide by offering free internet access, computer services, and technology training to those who may not have access otherwise. Our public libraries are an essential community tool and must continue to be fully funded.

**Name:** Mary Ann Schweizer

**Comment:** Please reject bill SSB3131; the libraries in all Iowa cities and towns are very important to Iowans, young and old. Leave those people and monies in charge as they are now.

**Name:** Dan Dickinson

**Comment:** I am opposed to the bill SSB 3131. One of my first memories was going to the Carnegie Library in town where I could check out books for free. As a teacher for 39 years, I used the local library to supplement my elementary classroom with books on science and history. I now see my grandchildren's excitement going to the library at the age of one to not only check out books, but also to experience activities sponsored by the library. This bill is not needed. I fear what it will do to local rural libraries if it moves forward.

**Name:** Hillory Jaco

**Comment:** I'm writing to voice the strongest opposition possible to SSB 3131. Making funding optional for libraries is a disservice to every single Iowan. Libraries are a hub for the community offering a wealth of knowledge, resources and tools for people of all ages. By not requiring funding many libraries, especially those in rural Iowa, will close. Allowing city councils to have control over libraries (and their assets) instead of trained library boards is an obvious ploy to politicize and police libraries. Libraries are a beacon for free speech and equality and should remain so. Kill this appalling bill!

**Name:** Jan Norris

**Comment:** Please do not let SSB 3131 advance. Our public libraries have library directors who are competent and focused on their responsibilities. They have oversight from a board. There is no reason to meddle in our public libraries. Funding should remain as shall, not made optional. Decisions should remain within the structures already in place. City councils do not have the same expertise and have a variety of multiple other responsibilities. Our public libraries provide a unique service to ALL residents that should not be impeded by politics.

**Name:** Marilyn Stirler

**Comment:** I do not support the proposed changes in this bill. Funding should not become a choice. Stable funding is needed to keep library collections, activities and facilities relevant and updated. In addition, we do NOT need to politicize our public libraries by giving the city council the power to make such substantial changes without a

public vote. It feels like an attempt to take another route to ban books (that some disapprove of) from our public libraries. As a former member of the Mitchellville Public Library Foundation, I find the proposed transfer of library property to the city to be another government resource grab. Our Foundation raised funds to remodel and furnish our library. Why should the city take over those assets?

**Name:** Madison Kirby

**Comment:** The library is one of the only places people can go for community without having to pay for separate services. As a disabled person, going to the library is my only way to get out of the house and go do something. In many smaller communities this is one of the main gathering places and one of the main things to do to get connection with others. If this happens so many libraries will close or not function the same before they eventually close. Libraries serve so many purposes especially in a small community and by making these changes you are gambling with anyone being able to go to a library in the future. There is absolutely no reason to do this except to try to take funding from a place we have always had available and the impact it will have on all communities with libraries will not be able to be undone. I remember not even 8 years ago my family did not have computer access and the only way I could get homework done was by using my local library for the computers and information. I can't imagine the amount of people this could harm if they lose their only reasonable access to information and the internet especially as our society continues to improve technology. Lots of people think everyone has computers, or ipads, or even Internet access and that unfortunately is not the truth.

**Name:** David Weldon

**Comment:** Public libraries exist to aid in the creation of an informed public, without which democracy can not function. If the Republican party of Iowa is opposed to democracy then the passage of this bill makes perfect sense. Libraries also support civilization and a harmonious society. If the Republican Party of Iowa is disdainful of civilization nor understand the necessity for harmony among the People, then they are destructive of our American system of government and living.

**Name:** Sandi Sickels

**Comment:** I am adamantly opposed to this bill. I take my granddaughter to the library regularly to enjoy the many services, resources, and programs offered. Decision making needs to remain with local library boards. Vote no on this bill.

**Name:** Sara Kavalier

**Comment:** Vote NO! Libraries provide numerous resources to our community and offer equality for those who cannot access so many resources for themselves. This is a thinly veiled attempt to again strip rights from the public and undermine education. Vote NO!

**Name:** Elizabeth Spratt

**Comment:** I am opposed to SB 3131. This bill is nothing but a complete disservice to the general public.

**Name:** Libra Edmundson

**Comment:** Leave Iowa libraries alone. Community resources are not your playthings.

**Name:** Cindy Hohl

**Comment:** I am a Sioux City native and my entire family lives there. Iowans need equal access to free public library services and there are studies showing the high value that libraries return to the community. Libraries are sound investments and they provide literacy based services to help provide everyone with an educated society. Summer reading is Iowa Code so how will residents in all 99 counties receive access to library services if small and rural libraries are closed? We can trust librarians to provide essential services to the community and Iowans deserve better.

**Name:** Julie Stoffer

**Comment:** Please vote no on bill SSB 3131. Not only is it an unnecessary bill, but it is a bill that could endanger the public's access to a place free from political ideology and personal preference. Libraries are often the heart of the communities they serve. They serve the public without prejudice and serve with expertise in their field that city councils do not have and do not have the time to acquire. Library boards work collaboratively already with city councils to provide the best services possible for its patrons. It is a trusted collaboration in which this bill places that trust in danger. Please vote no on this unneeded and potentially harmful bill, not only to our libraries and libraries staff, but also harmful to all citizens.

**Name:** Rebekah Hosford

**Comment:** I keep trying to understand how this bill came to be proposed. I see no way in which it benefits anybody. The city does not need the added responsibility of overseeing the library nor do they want it. The City Council/Mayor has entrusted the running of the library to the people they've appointed people who have undergone training so they can better serve the library and its patrons, people who care about access to information and the freedom to read, people who have the time to learn the ins and outs about the history of libraries and the reasons behind library policies. The relationship between the City and Library Boards works perfectly well, and there is no need to fix what isn't broken. This bill will only create problems. It will politicize libraries and create a space that may not feel welcome to all. Because the library is for all no matter their beliefs. Everyone deserves to see themselves on our shelves and in our programming. SSB 3131 also threatens library funding, a continuation of House File 718. Why are we trying to take away the voice of citizens? Library levies were voted on by the citizens of the area. My community voted to levy a tax on the library. Now my voices mean nothing? I urge you to not go forward with SSB 3131. I'd like to end this comment with some library joy, so here are 10 things in no particular order that made the staff at my local library smile: 1. There was a young girl who enjoyed our picture book about Banksy and was looking for more books about them or their art. While they were looking around, I gathered up some of my favorite youth books about art/artists (including the other 2 books by the author who wrote our Banksy book and an art history book that mentions street art) and showed them to her. Her face lit up and she got SUPER excited. It was heartwarming to share my love of art/art history with her and see her get so happy to read the books I found. 2. A few days ago, a family that just moved from California came into the library on a whim. While here, they found homeschooling resources and signed up for a teacher card. What made my day was their enthusiasm to be at the library and that they really seemed to appreciate the services we offer. They told me they were impressed with "whoever" selected the books on our New shelf. 3. A woman came up to the desk today and told us that she really appreciates the effort we put into displaying diverse books. She loves the range of diversity she sees on the shelves. 4. We had a patron compliment the diverse books on display/on the top of the picture book shelves. She asked if people ever complained about them, and that she would stand between them and us. 5. A teen earned a free book by reading five books. She came to the desk a bit confused by what she had won. When I pulled out the cart of books for her to choose from, she was so excited and confused. "I can just keep one of these?!" she kept saying. It really made me smile. 6. I handed a kiddo the book he was looking for and he was so happy to have it, he immediately hugged it to his chest! 7. A mom and a group of tween girls were using the "Welcome to your period" brochure and looking for almost all of the books in it! It made me super happy to see it connecting with patrons and being of use as an information resource. 8. An elderly patron came in for help using his smartphone. We ended up downloading an ornithology app together and he learned to use it to listen to bird calls. His whole face lit up and he gave me a fist bump! I still smile every time I think about that :) 9. I heard a patron get really, really excited about a book featuring marching band romance. It was an infectious happiness! 10. While I was cleaning up the playhouse I heard a couple of moms talking and one said to the other that they were so happy they met each other.

They exchanged numbers and were going to get together again so their girls could play together. I love that libraries can foster friendships like this!

**Name:** Laura Sanders

**Comment:** I oppose SSB3131. Keep local control over libraries. There is no benefit to this bill. Our small town and rural communities have excellent volunteer library boards and there's no need for this proposed change.

**Name:** Christine Garrow

**Comment:** Iowa and everywhere needs libraries. We cant let the government chip away at these sacred institutions. They are not archaic buildings with shelves of dusty books; they are the epicenters of free thought and access to knowledge and experiences without an expectation to pay money when you walk in their doors or log into their websites. Write to your state representatives and save our libraries.

**Name:** Persephonae Rivas

**Comment:** I am against SSB 3131. Leave libraries alone. They are functioning well and they dont need interference.

**Name:** Charlie Johnson

**Comment:** I am writing to oppose SSB 3131 and to ask that this legislation not move forward. I grew up in Oskaloosa, where my mother served as a member of the library board for the Oskaloosa Public Library. I learned from a young age that the library was a place of safety and inspiration. In a democracy there must be a free exchange of ideas. Iowa's public libraries, and the volunteer citizen boards that govern them, have an important role in insuring that our democratic system functions well. If there are concerns with how a library operates there are processes available for addressing those concerns. Let's keep our libraries locally governed and free from political influence. Please vote "No" on SSB 3131.

**Name:** Courtney Collier

**Comment:** I support SSB 3131. With the recent revelations of public libraries providing drag story hour for children, drag parties, pornographic and obscene books to minors, and the libraries being supported by the Marxist organization, the ALA voters should have the say when it comes to their funding.

**Name:** Layne Rasmussen

**Comment:** I am opposed to SSB 3131.

**Name:** Matthew Cabel

**Comment:** I strongly oppose this bill. Besides libraries being the greatest example we have of free speech in our country, libraries are a crucial resource for everyone in our communities. Stripping these library boards of what makes them succeed in this case, the community aspect takes away the ensurance that libraries are able to meet the unique needs of their communities. Libraries are for the people of their communities and should be governed by people of these communities.

**Name:** Helen Rigdon

**Comment:** I want to submit my opposition to SSB 3131. Public libraries are such a vital link for members of a community and to jeopardize library funding or the structure of library boards, is not a good look for the state of Iowa. To strip library boards of their authority and give it to city councils is not a viable solution. Library board members receive training in how a library operates and is unique in structure and mission from other city departments. Last year alone the Sioux City Public Library returned dollarfordollar its budget back to the community in services and materials. There is no better investment then in libraries.I am asking you to please reconsider and leave

the laws as they are.

**Name:** Richard Eskelsen

**Comment:** I strongly oppose this bill. Libraries are a vital resource for all citizens of our communities. Removing authority from library boards takes away vital community oversight. Because of the unique makeup of boards, they represent citizens in a very important way. Lastly, any change in funding jeopardizes the future of rural libraries. As one of the last great equalizers of knowledge to all citizens, I oppose any initiative that makes funding for public libraries optional.

**Name:** Julie McCarty

**Comment:** Just another ridiculous, unnecessary bill. Libraries are one of the most important institutions in our society. They provide everyone with free access to information and education, regardless of socioeconomic status or location. They promote literacy, offer people a way to find jobs, and are often hubs for our local communities. Librarians are highly educated (masters or higher) information professionals who possess encyclopedic knowledge. Doubt you get that expertise from your city council.

**Name:** Tim Becker

**Comment:** This bill is a terrible idea and a waste of taxpayer resources. The fascism being expressed in the IA state legislature and nationwide is abhorrent and those taking part this agenda should be ashamed of themselves.

**Name:** Wendy Johnson

**Comment:** As a library user, and a library director, I strongly oppose SSB 3131. Libraries aren't just a place to get books libraries are an important part of the community where citizens can get information, use a computer, attend a free program, and form connections with other citizens. Library trustees volunteer their time to learn about library policies, keep up to date on legislation that deals with libraries, and work tirelessly to make the library a better place for their patrons and their community. Library boards should be able to decide what is best for the library.

**Name:** Wayne Yanda

**Comment:** SSB 3131 confirms that the public's right to access knowledge and information is against everything the Iowa GOP believes in their never-ending quest to drive Iowa to the bottom of the quality of life rankings in this country. Bottom line, SSB 3131 smells like a CAFO sewage pit about to breach and pollute our water supply. Now CAFOs are a real problem; one you in the statehouse could actually do something about, and it makes us wonder why you won't. Or can't.

**Name:** Rod Peck

**Comment:** This is an outrageous attempt at stripping Americans of our rights, and I'll bet it's only the beginning. People need to wake up and see what is going on.

**Name:** Margaret Cretzmeyer

**Comment:** I adamantly oppose SSB3131. Public libraries must remain under the oversight of local boards and not be subjected to politicized whims. The state of Iowa is going in a dark direction of censorship and libraries must remain the bastion of free access to information that they have always been. Margaret Cretzmeyer

**Name:** Cheri Brown

**Comment:** Our local library is crucial to our community! Personally, I don't know what I'd do without the assistance of our local librarian and the library's resources. I also utilize libraries in our nearby communities. Without the strength of our libraries, you add to the further isolation of rural communities.

**Name:** Cheri Brown

**Comment:** Our local library is crucial to our community! Personally, I don't know what I'd do without the assistance of our local librarian and the library's resources. I also utilize libraries in our nearby communities. Without the strength of our libraries, you add to the further isolation of rural communities.

**Name:** Cheri Brown

**Comment:** Our local library is crucial to our community! Personally, I don't know what I'd do without the assistance of our local librarian and the library's resources. I also utilize libraries in our nearby communities. Without the strength of our libraries, you add to the further isolation of rural communities.

**Name:** Nicole Connick

**Comment:** I am against SSB3131, please reconsider this legislation. I am the Director of Minburn Public Library, as the Director it is my duty to provide my small community with resources they need for life. Without these levy funds our services would be drastically cut. Not to mention stripping the Library Board of their responsibilities! The Board is there to act as a bridge between the Library and the City Government and is much needed. We have a responsibility to our Patrons to provide a library free for everyone regardless of their ability to pay. If this bill were put into action that would no longer be possible. I urge you to stop this bill from moving forward, leaving the leadership of the library with the board as it belongs.

**Name:** Cindy Watson

**Comment:** Vote NO! I strongly oppose SSB 3131. This proposed legislation is not in the best interests of Iowans.

**Name:** Ellen Dettmer

**Comment:** The Iowa Library Association (ILA) vehemently opposes Senate Study Bill 3131 and I do too. Libraries are pillars of the community and provide essential resources and services to all community members. This bill threatens the autonomy of libraries across the state of Iowa. It is essential that libraries are governed by local library boards, who can devote their time to understanding what it takes to run a library efficiently. Such a drastic measure threatens the operational and financial sustainability of communities and their libraries. Our libraries are irreplaceable assets, and it is crucial that we protect their ability to thrive for the benefit of current and future generations.

**Name:** Nancy Blaser

**Comment:** Dear Subcommittee members, Please do NOT pass this SSB3131. I question the intent of the bill. The new language proposed is extremely overreaching: Changing the language from SHALL collect the levy to MAY collect the levy implies a threat. I can take away your budget if you do not bend to my will. This one statement reduces the effect and the freedom of the hard working efforts of the library board. The current levy 6.75 % of \$1000 is extremely frugal. It amounts to only \$10/yr for a \$150,000 residence for this wonderful amenity to the community. The library has grown through the years to encompass internet access, material swapping between other libraries, and an important community support and resource center. Most of our 500 some libraries in Iowa are in rural areas. The access available through the library helps our smaller communities become less isolated and connects communities to each other. I have yet to experience any wasting of the precious revenues. The current law states that if a change is wanted by an individual or city council member, it is put to the voters. If turned down, it cannot be presented again for 4 years. This is an important check and balance that needs to stay in the law. This prevents a small number of individuals overtaking the decisions of a library board. Note that major cities in Iowa are currently already appointed by the mayor and approved by the city



council. (I checked Des Moines, Davenport, Bettendorf, Clinton, and Cedar Rapids). That is enough influence by the city council. No more is needed. I also oppose transferring all titles of assets to the city. What is this attempt? Am I being cynical thinking the city could sell off the building and assets without voter approval. I think Not. Finally, please remember that the library is a beautiful resource available for all. As with ALL information out there, it can be used for good or ill. Our job as parents is to teach and guide our children how to navigate the wild world of information. This does not mean shutting down access because one child should not yet be exposed to that information. That is our ever exhausting job, finding age appropriate information for our childrens research and entertainment. I cannot tell you how much time I spent helping a 5th grader find age appropriate resources for a very heavy subject of Nazi concentration camps. I helped her hone down her choices and previewed the visuals available. There was much college age appropriate research out there. Just because I didnt want my child exposed to them, they still belonged in the library for others to use. Thank you for this time.

**Name:** Kathleen Sutherland

**Comment:** This is a play for more centralization and an attempt to phase libraries out. Please don't pass it.

**Name:** Matthew Van Maanen

**Comment:** I oppose SSB 3131. These proposed changes aren't in the best interest of our libraries, the communities they serve, or our state.

**Name:** Terri Paulson

**Comment:** SSB3131 is yet another attempt to take away Iowas civic rights and power. Library Boards are individuals in our communities who are trained and have the expertise relating to the services of the local libraries. This bill risks the future of our local libraries. Vote NO!

**Name:** Brenda Ross

**Comment:** I urge lawmakers to seriously consider the consequences of SSB 3131 and vote no. It could close the doors of many libraries across our state libraries that may be the last safe haven for children and vulnerable adults in their communities. Libraries and library workers are helping our citizens in so many valuable ways to find jobs, affordable housing, secure food for their children, pay taxes, send and receive important documents, get help understanding a difficult medical condition or diagnosis, find a safe place to spend time without having to buy something, learn and grow into a better citizen...the list goes on and on. SSB 3131 is not good for Iowans!

**Name:** Brandon Schmidt

**Comment:** I would like to voice my objection to SSB 3131. This bill is a shameful attempt to insert politics into an apolitical institution. This is a solution without a problem, and limits Iowans ability to have a voice in their local community. This bill would strip local library boards of their authority and threaten the independence and financial stability of libraries across the state. Library boards serve a critical role in our towns and cities. They are composed of citizens who have the knowledge and expertise to understand the important functions of libraries and the needs of their community. It is critical that library boards maintain their independence from local politicians. By eliminating the levy, this legislation would threaten funding for libraries across Iowa. This bill also threatens the operations and functionality of these institutions by forcing cities to take possession of library property. Libraries serve meaningful roles in our communities, and it is important that their independence, autonomy, and financial stability be maintained. I urge you to reject this Big Government overreach into local affairs and preserve the current system of library governance and funding.

**Name:** Hans Klein-Hewett

**Comment:** It is obvious that this bill is a bad idea. The state legislature should never decide what cities should do with their tax funds. Leave these decisions up to the cities and their constituents; after all, the local constituents use the libraries and elect their city representatives. In general: stop trying to meddle with access to information. It is embarrassing to have these topics discussed in our state.

**Name:** Emily Akker

**Comment:** I am strongly against SSB 3131 as I believe that this bill will weaken our current infrastructure in Iowa. Libraries are an integral part of society and I fear that if this bill passes, libraries in Iowa will be eventually forced to close. Please remember that free societies read freely and focus on real issues that are actually affecting Iowans.

**Name:** Darrell Aaron

**Comment:** I strongly oppose this bill. There is absolutely no reason to be making changes to how libraries act independently of the city council. Libraries are a vital part of all communities and the only change you should be making to funding is to increase the amount.

**Name:** Melissa Rogers

**Comment:** I do not support a violation of the First Amendment, so I don't support this bill.

**Name:** Angela Gates

**Comment:** I am saddened and sickened by the very concept of this bill. It essentially indicates that it's not a necessity to fund libraries. I can tell you beyond a shadow of a doubt that we need libraries! Yes, libraries are books. But they are also places of refuge and help in times of crisis. Libraries are many things to many people. They are help with job searching, they are programing for early literacy, they are computer and internet access to those who don't have it anywhere else. Libraries are one of the few remaining places in our world where a person can come in, be welcomed, and not be expected to buy or do anything in particular. In a library, a person can just be. People are free to learn and explore and find solutions. We need libraries! This bill also proposes that library guidance and direction be turned over to city operations instead of dedicated library boards. Library boards have already been established by city ordinances to guide library operations. Boards are in place to provide dedicated attention to library matters while protecting library services from potential political influence while maintaining intellectual freedom. If control is turned over to city oversight, resources may not be allocated to the needed services, worst cases being that library and patron needs are intentionally denied. I'm not saying this will happen, I'm just saying that boards are in place to protect the public's access to information and services as a whole. City departments and governance are already strained! Why take already established guidance away? Library assets would become solely controlled by city decision, not by dedicated boards and/or librarians who are best aware of the needs of library users and the community. The very people who interact with patrons and library users everyday are those who know what is needed. Please leave our libraries alone. Do not try to utilize them as political pawns as this bill makes an attempt to do.

**Name:** Vicky Brenner

**Comment:** This is a hard no on SSB 3131. Public libraries, especially in rural areas, are vital & valued. This bill undermines local control. Leave our libraries alone.

**Name:** J Scott

**Comment:** I am in support of this bill. Years ago we would not know what we know today and I would have said no to this bill. The ALA is the primary reason behind all of the explicit materials infiltrating our schools. Their library bill of rights declares a socalled right for minors to have access to all reading material, regardless of age. Public libraries have voiced that minors will have access to all materials, regardless

of content, (including R rated movies!) because they get their policies from the ALA. They will not impose age appropriate restrictions. This is wrong. Currently libraries are automatically funded, and this would give accountability by placing control of funding to local elected officials. Tax payer dollars should not be given to entities that expose children to inappropriate material. Please vote yes!

**Name:** Lauren Willberg

**Comment:** I am against SSB 3131.

**Name:** Leanne Kimble

**Comment:** Please vote against SSB3131. Leave the governance of our local libraries to a board of directors. Those members are purposely positioned to understand the needs, wants, & desires of the library and community. They know best how to allocate funding which is an essential piece of library existence. Please vote no!

**Name:** Jamie Neff

**Comment:** This bill puts at risk Iowans' right to Intellectual Freedom. Please do not move forward with SSB 3131. I have previously served as a library director in a small, rural community and those levy dollars make a difference! My family benefits from the wide variety of services provided by our local libraries and SSB 3131 jeopardizes the funding and decisionmaking capacity of some of the few truly public spaces we have left. The board composition and process (representation and voice at the table) is critical to being able to make truly local decisions. They respond to community needs and enhance our daily living and quality of life through the work they do. Library staff are accredited through state programs and trustees engage in regular training, and their knowledge and expertise is invaluable to our rural community. In order to maintain the quality of library services in Iowa, moving the decisionmaking from boards of trustees to city administration will end up hurting Iowans. For instance, what will happen when administration has to pick between funding fire departments, or libraries? That is not an Iowa I want to imagine.

**Name:** Kyra Smith

**Comment:** I am against SSB 3131! Libraries are places that bring people and ideas together. Libraries are the best places to do that. The city does not want to have this department or control over it and many cities do not have the means to manage this. Do not change how libraries are functioning. They are a hidden gem that we don't need to break.

**Name:** Angie Hance

**Comment:** I am opposed to this bill which would put undue burden on small town Iowa libraries and likely shut many down due to a lack of ability to require tax levies to support local public libraries. I also don't agree that city government should be in control of all property. The library is governed by a board and makes decisions for its communities based on their need. They, not the city government, know what the library needs based on input from patrons. Let's not take more control away from public entities and keep our libraries safe by ensuring they can be funded appropriately. Small towns, once again, are going to be hurt by introduced legislation. Let's stop the bleed now.

**Name:** Sharon Falduto

**Comment:** I oppose SSB3131. Libraries are meant to be spaces that hold a variety of literature, including literature with which some people don't agree. Library boards and librarians have the knowledge and information to provide literature, as well as technical help, for the citizens of their communities.